

PAS expected to remain in Pakatan but not agree on Wan Azizah as MB

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ANALYSIS BY THE MALAYSIAN INSIDER

Out of the four possible options to be deliberated by the PAS central leadership when it meets today over the Selangor menteri besar crisis and the Islamist party's future in Pakatan Rakyat, it will most likely choose to remain in the opposition pact but not agree with PKR's choice of candidate for the MB's post.

The four options facing the party are:

- * To stay in Pakatan but tell PKR to endorse another candidate for the MB post;
- * To leave Pakatan and stand as a lone party;
- * To leave Pakatan and join Tan Sri Abdul Khalid Ibrahim with Barisan Nasional to form the Selangor government; or

- * To support PKR's choice of Datuk Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail as MB and remain in Pakatan.

The 38-member PAS central committee is expected to go with the first option as this is the most logical compromise following the decision of the Shura Council, which had expressed support for Khalid.

However, after Khalid was sacked from PKR, PAS now has to strike a compromise between the party's wants and the need to remain in Pakatan.

This is because besides supporting Khalid, the Shura Council also wants PAS to remain in the opposition coalition as that was what the PAS assembly had previously decided – to strengthen Pakatan Rakyat.

"Ustaz Hadi has agreed to remove Khalid but PKR has to compromise and put up another candidate besides Dr Wan Azizah," a senior PAS leader said, referring to PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

"If Anwar (PKR de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim) insists on keeping Dr Wan Azizah, this shows that it's not that he does not want Khalid but he wants Dr Wan Azizah."

However, this popular view has been disrupted after PKR roped in two PAS assemblymen – Hasnul Baharuddin (Morib) and Saari Sungib (Hulu Kelang) – to attend Dr Wan Azizah's press conference on Thursday and express support for her, effectively giving her the majority (30) in the 56-member state assembly.

As a result of this development, PAS could take the second option, that is, leave PR because it is displeased with PKR's actions.

This displeasure is reflected in the angry reaction of many in PAS following the actions of Hasnul and Saari.

Those in PAS who are keen to remain in PR also have to contend with the "pro-UG" (unity government) faction that wants PAS to join with Umno.

PKR's action to rope in the support of Hasnul and Saari has become the pro-UG group's main weapon to push PAS leaders to leave Pakatan, either to be with Khalid and Umno to form a new government in Selangor or stand on their own.

Temerloh MP Nasrudin Hassan commented on this in a Facebook posting, saying: "The culture of threat politics has crept into PAS. Is the filtering process being done naturally?"

Another PAS leader said: "If PAS stops thinking rationally and is angry with what PKR did, then PAS will leave Pakatan and stand alone."

Whatever the PAS leadership finally decides today, a central committee member predicted that the issue of leaving Pakatan will be debated hotly at the meeting as the differences between its leaders have been festering for too long.

"I am sure there will be some clashes between those who want to remain in Pakatan and those who want out of Pakatan as they are angry with PKR and DAP," a PAS leader, who will attend the meeting, told The Malaysian Insider.

The leadership is expected to focus also on the actions of Hasnul and Saari.

One group will say that both assemblymen wanted to save the Pakatan Rakyat government, which has been taken over by the party-less Khalid, while another faction would claim that both have gone against the party's decision to act only after today's meeting.

This sentiment was reflected in the statement by PAS deputy president Datuk Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man, who had urged all parties to wait for the August 17 meeting.

"Turning back on the decision of the committee will not get any blessings and if there are problems, the party will not be responsible," he was reported saying in the party's organ Harakah daily.

However, one PAS leader told The Malaysian Insider that the duo's action had, in fact, saved the dignity of PR, which is being destroyed by Khalid. – August 17, 2014.

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